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Pre-
556 sently the guests assemble, those who are *noxol* wearing on
575 their heads one or more weasel skins as a mark of membership
23 in the society. Each takes the seat to which he is entitled,
24 the chiefs behind the fire, or on either side of it, the commoners,
554 slaves, and foreigners in the two corners nearest the door. The
heralds move to and fro between door and fire, their constant
exchange of remarks adding to the general interest of the af-
208 fair. It is the function of a herald to lend dignity to chiefs by
the tone of his observations, but should one fail to live up to
his station, the herald is privileged to comment thereon. In
some respects his position approximates that of a buffoon, but
as a herald always receives valuable presents, the office is
sometimes accepted by ambitious young men, willing to under-
take the slightly derogatory duties in return for the substantial
gain.

24 A number of young lads, friends or relatives of X, distribute
552 the food. It is placed in boxes; an important chief is not called
183 upon to share with any one, whereas six or seven men of no
standing may partake from one box. These receptacles, with
whatever food remains in them, are taken home by the guests;
178 otherwise the host would be insulted. Many boxes are lost in
this way, a source of considerable irritation. After the first
course, a second follows, consisting of a different kind of food
in another box, and in some cases there is a third, and even a
fourth course. A chief must never appear stingy. The more
he gives, the more does his prestige increase. Also, a man who
gives freely receives abundantly, so that generosity brings its
reward.

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552 Next, the father or other male relative of X's wife, or a
537 famed friend who speaks for him, stands up and makes a speech,
extolling the fame of his own family by sketching in general
425 outlines one of the myths of his ancestors, and announcing that
424 X's wife is taking to her husband some portion of it. This may
582 be the prerogative of using a spoon carved, for example, with
the shape of a beaver, or a carved box, or a totem-pole with
certain figures on it, or the right to use a painting of a grizzly
bear on the wall of his house, or an ancestral name.

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request X to have his son initiated, promising him financial assistance. 556* 575

These preliminaries have probably been commenced before *nusalt*; at any rate they are completed as soon as possible, so that a few nights later X is able to instruct a herald to invite the *nusalt* to his house. The singers are in attendance. The father, or other relative, of one of those about to be received into the ranks of the *nusalt*, expands in general terms the ancestral myth containing the one to be conferred, or will ask a fluent speaker to do this for him. Another follows, until myths have been recited for all. The singers listen attentively, knowing that without further instruction they are expected to compose two songs for each person, embodying a few salient points in the myth, without exposing the details. In point of fact, the singers have probably heard the myth on previous occasions. After a distribution of food, provided by X, the people disperse. [537] 533 556* 575

For several days the singers work at the songs. The principles governing their composition are identical for all types. At night, as he walks in the forest, or at any other time, a singer constantly tries to compose tune. Others do the same, and at intervals they meet, either some lonely spot or in the back-room of a house. Each singer who has composed a tune beats out its time, humming as he does so; then another gives his tune, and perhaps a third. After much discussion, which in some cases becomes acrimonious, it is decided what two tunes are the best for the occasion. Words are then supplied, a matter of less difficulty, all the singers assisting. In this way the necessary songs required are provided. When ready, [illegible] the singers informs X of the fact.

X decides that on a certain night two of the initiates shall begin a period of confinement in the back-room of his house. This information is passed round in secret by the *nusalt*, and the initiates, whom it will be convenient to refer to as Y, is duly warned. At dusk a reliable *nusalt* is sent out to the woods behind the village with one of the large cone-shaped whistles.

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adopted, probably as a prerogative obtained through marriage, from the Bella Bella or Rivers Inlet people. The diversity in ritual supports this view. There was not sufficient time for the procedure to become stabilized between the introduction of the concept and the dislocation of Bella Coola social life through the influence of the white man. It is also possible that the *tatuinaw* was added to *nusuk* rites from the older *a'alk* society (I, p. 273).

Whatever may have been the history of the *tatuinaw*, it provides Y with a mask, or with two, if two figures have appeared. He guards them jealously, though secretly, throughout his life and uses them only on rare ceremonial occasions. It is one of these masks which will be brought out if one of his family gives a dramatic representation of his return after death. A mask of this type is sometimes willed, but the legatee alters the design before using it.

A short pause follows the singing of the second, or third, song, during which some chief or chiefs may make a laudatory speech concerning Y's family history. Then the singers again sing the first song, and *nusuk* members of the audience join in. Similarly, the second song is practised. These two are sung, time after time, until the *nusuk* have thoroughly mastered them. When the singers consider that this has been accomplished, they tell X, who communicates with the *nusuk* man outside who has the whistle, and again its eerie notes are heard. Some of the uninitiated, believing that the supernatural being who gives potency to the ritual is at hand, hurriedly leave in fear. At the same time some of the *nusuk* conduct to the back-room the second initiate whose songs are to be sung that night. The procedure in his case is identical with that described for Y. Usually it is considered sufficient to exclude two on one night, though three may be attempted. When the songs of the last have been sung, food is distributed and the people disperse.

A few nights later the same ritual is repeated for two more initiates, who join their predecessors in the back-room. Here they spend their time in idleness, the only essential being the

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preservation of an air of mystery by keeping out of sight of those who are not *nusuk*. Food is brought to them, and members of the society are free to enter the room at any time. Some of the older ones enlighten Y and his fellows with regard to the secret rites, and especially to the human origin of the whistle. Proud of his new status, an initiate never dreams of transmitting this information to those who are not members of the society. As a privilege, the neophytes are sometimes allowed to go out at night, care being taken that no uninitiated person shall see them. The length of the period of confinement varies according to the number of young people to be admitted, and on the actual time of the potlatch; the minimum duration is about two weeks, the maximum, four months. Sometimes the tediousness is lightened by the arrival of carpenters who have chosen this secret place to work at the *nusuk* masks. After all the initiates have been confined to the back-room, X continues to invite people to his house at frequent intervals to practise their songs. On each occasion food is distributed, so that the meetings are expensive to the host, but no donor grumbles about it, as thereby he establishes his prestige as a chief.

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THE VALIDATION OF *Nusuk* NAMES

The next event in the validation of the initiates' *nusuk* names,[1] a ceremony termed *so'oxalkm*. X., with the assistance of his family, piles on the floor of his house the goods which he intends to use for this purpose. In the old days these consisted of skins, blankets, food, baskets, bowls, sleeves (symbolized by stones), canoes (symbolized by sticks), and so on. Nowadays, money is used. Towards dusk a herald summons the people to X's house. For many years it has been customary to invite everyone, but it is said that long ago only the *nusuk* would have been present. When all are seated,

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[1] Validation of the neophytes' names is essential at the potlatch itself, but chiefs endeavour to display their wealth and generosity to their fellow-villagers as well. Consequently, though dances are eager to perform this rite, it can be continued entirely without affecting the potlatch.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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553 without special places, X calls upon some eloquent friend to
556 direct the distribution of the money. This speaker states how
575 X is carrying out the rites incumbent on his noble and exalted
[537] station, how all honour him for so doing, and how all should strive to follow his example. He then says that to give strength to the name Qaqwaxila, for example, X will give away, say $100. He further announces who have contributed this amount: perhaps $50 from X, and the other half from various relatives of Y. If the sum in question be large it is always mentioned from whom, and how the donor has obtained the money. Thus every financial transaction becomes publicly known, and the more prominently a man figures, the greater is his prestige. Next, the amount to be used for the second initiate's name is announced, with the same details, and in like fashion the sums decided upon for each successive initiate.

Then the total amount is distributed among the guests by the heralds, under X's supervision. He usually gives everyone the same amount; men sometimes receive more than women, but in every case members of the same sex receive an equal sum. The Bella Coola are not expert mathematicians, so that fairly division is the rule. If X, for example, decides to give $1.50 to each person present, it is a time of considerable anxiety while the stack of bills is being reduced, to watch whether or not there will be the exact amount. If X finds out he is short he will hastily borrow some money, as it would be an insult to omit anyone. If the amount be too great, he will use the surplus in making presents to the more influential guests.

With the exception of this possible surplus, the money distributed is regarded as an outright present; "it has flowed away to make good the boys' names" is the Bella Coola expression. A child will remember how much he has received, and if he wishes to uphold or to increase his own dignity, he will make a point of returning at least an equivalent to X on some future occasion. But though in effect he may make return, such is never said to be the case. "The money has flowed away."

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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nature will try to bestow a valuable present. If a man is too poor to give anything, he can avoid the obligation by not dancing when his tune is beaten out. The presents are piled together, and then the host, aided by several important chiefs, distributes them to the messengers, at the same time making laudatory speeches. The chief of the envoys receives more than the members of his crew.

Then the messenger-chief stands up and announces the names of those whom X has invited to his potlatch, using in each case the ancestral designation of the person summoned. Then the envoys, in a body, go to every house in the village. Probably all to be invited are present in the house of the chief, yet the messenger-chief must call out in the doorway of each house:

"Chief So-and-so, prepare your paddles and leave to-morrow."

Early next morning the messengers rouse those whom they have invited and, as a mark of respect, help them to carry their goods to the canoes. There is an attitude of shaming combined with that of deference, since those assisted will have been placed under obligations. They also take to their canoes their own recently acquired goods. Envoys and guests set out together in their respective craft, and only separate as they near Bella Coola.

ARRIVAL OF THE GUESTS

While the canoes containing the first party of guests remain at anchor to wait for high tide, the envoys proceed at once to X's house, now completely redecorated if not entirely rebuilt. Here a huge fire is blazing, and members of the *xaaid* society are passing in and out, making ready for the ceremony. Both men and women beautify themselves by painting their faces in any designs they fancy, and by combing their hair and placing eagle down upon it. The guests at anchor lay planks across their canoes so as to form a dancing platform. Then, as the tide rises, the singers in the house beat out the tune of

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515 In the gathering dusk all assemble in X's house; Y's relatives attend or not as they wish. X's father would feel insulted if anyone else should stay away without a valid excuse, but in point of fact everyone is eager for an evening's entertainment. The singers take their accustomed places behind the fire and the guests arrange themselves in the house without reference to rank. The musicians strike up the *hiaiat* song of anyone present, and the person so indicated dances. The first tune used is frequently that of X's father, and the that of his mother, but there is no fixed rule about this. The singers [539] choose and beat out tune after tune, and guest after guest dances, but, since none of the supernatural beings is present, the affair is of a non-sacred nature. After rehearsing the most popular *hiaiat* songs, the musicians beat out the *nusk* songs of many of the guests who, in succession, dance to them; the songs of shamans are used in like fashion. Sometimes the singers continue until everyone present has danced, at other times they curtail the ceremony, as they think fit. When they decide to stop, they announce this to X's father, who superintends the distribution to the guests of whatever kind of food has been provided.

During the meal, a fluent speaker stands up and expounds on behalf of X's father the ancestral myth to which his son's ancestral name is embodied. Sometimes X's father acts as his own orator, but usually a herald is called upon. [illegible] sufficient [illegible] to show the importance of X. The myth may either be one of the most ancient type dealing with the first settlement of this earth, or one of later date describing the exploits of X's famous ancestors; but in either case, as shown by the examples given in the last chapter, it contains an account of a marriage. It is always known, although not generally described, that as each of these several events performed, their number varying between two and thirteen. The orator, when outlining the myth, assumes this fact of it, and always announces how many dances he will perform; with the statement that there will be a like number on the morrow. In

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the same manner the fluent speaker outlines a myth belonging to the ancestral family of X's mother, again with emphasis on the dancers used by her ancestors. X, as a member of both ancestral families, can combine his rights from both sides, but it is customary for him to use no more than five or six performers. Should X have no claim to this privilege from either mother or father, an almost unthinkable situation, he is able to borrow the prerogative of using some from friends. The sentiment on which this oration of myths is based is the one so often mentioned; it marks the close relationship between the future children and their noble ancestors of old, a source of strength to the former.

X's father now names those whom he wishes to assist him on the following day. These are the dancers, who are chosen primarily for their skill in dancing, and secondarily in accordance with their rank. With them he selects a number of persons to stand near and help or "cherish" them as they perform. He also asks the services of some of the women who are professional dreiners; of the keeper of the marriage song of his ancestral family; and, finally, of a number of men to sit near the singers and assist them with suggestions. It would be most exceptional for anyone so called upon to decline the honour. It is near morning by this time and the guests depart.

On the following morning, the actual wedding day, X's father calls to his house those selected the previous evening as dancers and their assistants. The former wear blankets decorated with small copper ornaments[1] and carry circular wooden rattles provided with handles. Their clothing and rattles may be their own, but if they do not possess suitable attire, it is incumbent on X's father to provide them. Skins are piled up within the house, and some of these are said to "make soft the

[1] On the present time there is uncertainty as to the proper clothing of a marriage dancer. Several informants stated that it was a copper-decorated blanket, whereas others said that there was no special attire; one man claimed that an attempt was made to imitate the form and costume of X's first ancestor, and another that current costume was used. Probably there was no uniformity in custom.

537 585 [426] 585 [595] [614] [534] [292] [535] [184]

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581 two of his female relatives were murdered at Kimsquit. The slayer was
533 never detected, but most of the Bella Coola believe that it was done by
578 one of Imanus's relatives, and that the dispute about names was quite
425 sufficient to furnish an excuse for the deed.
[682] It is hoped that these two instances will serve to emphasize why the Bella Coola prefer marriages within the ranks of the ancestral family. When this takes place, names are usually given outright, and not merely promised for the use of the future children.

Imanus = ?

Nintemaiais = *Inuikinalis* = another woman

King George = ?

Jack King George = *Smoke*

585 After this digression, to return to the marriage of X and Y: The ceremony is taking place in the house of Y's father, and the parents of each participant have expounded parts of their origin myths, and promised names for the resultant children.

Then Y's relatives give numerous presents to X's family, in each case including those who are associating themselves with the contract. Canoes, slaves, blankets, and other articles of great worth are given; they are said to be "bed covering" for Y. The greater their value, the greater her prestige. Her father asks a fluent chief to address the assemblage, speaking as though he were Y. He says in effect:

[597] "My father, my mother, my brothers, my uncles, and their associates have given me my bed covering."

These presents are the binding feature of the wedding. They are said to lock the girl in her husband's house, and accordingly are sometimes called, "rope fastenings." This is [577] only done when a woman is married for the first time.

[537] Another orator now holds forth on behalf of Y's father:

"What we do today is no small matter. We have done today what was done in former times, and what shall be done in the future."

1:Mc:Dwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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One of Y's relatives now whispers to X's father that it is time to lead away the bride. One of X's party, either man or woman, comes forward, takes Y by the hand and guides her to a place among X's people, close to X himself. Y's father gives the conductor presents, which are not returnable. Without further ceremony, X's party returns to his house, taking the bride with them. She and X usually sit close together for the rest of the rite, but their actions are really of slight importance. 575

An hour or so after the return from Y's home, a messenger is sent to invite her father and other relatives to X's house. The guests seat themselves behind the fire, and a number of others crowd in to watch and listen. X and Y are both present, but do not take any leading part in the ceremony. A large amount of food is given to the guests, provided, of course, by X's father, and, as they are eating, a few gifts, termed "food," may be given. Then an eloquent chief expounds in lofty style the manner in which X's ancestors were married in the days of antiquity. As soon as his speech is ended, X's father distributes to Y's relatives presents, which are spoken of as "clothing." Theoretically, the presents "become nothing" for this purpose, but in reality they are returned later on as a means of increasing the prestige of each recipient. In consequence, care is taken to ensure that industrious individuals receive more than others. These presents are often of considerable value, since they not only mark the noble sentiments of X's family with regard to him, but they are also a sound financial investment on behalf of X, whose wife will help him at future potlatches. Goods received as "food" at the meal are restored in the same fashion as this "clothing." This completes the marriage ceremony. Y's relatives often stay for some time longer in X's house, but gradually go home as they think fit. [537]

That night X and Y sleep together.

It is contrary to custom for X's relatives to hoard the goods which they have received from Y's relatives as "food

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553 556 583 present is made. The recipient may either be X himself or one of his relatives who has conferred a gift on one of Y's family. The goods are taken inside, counted, displayed, and the same announcement made. These presents are given away by X the same evening, so that the only practical advantage that he receives is that the ultimate recipients make their returns, if any, to him. He makes no recompense to Y's relatives for these.

[537] A fluent orator next speaks on behalf of Y's father to the following effect:

"Please, ye people, listen to my words. This is an important occasion, hearken to what I have to say. Long ago our first ancestors were married, as X and Y have been, and it is fitting that we should make the name ..... live again in Y. Three years [or as long as the name has been dormant] it has been dead, as if living with the ghosts beneath the earth. Now it shall stand up again in Y; henceforth we use it for her. Come forth ..... [using Y's new name], your father relieves you from X for fifty blankets [for example]."

Y may be anywhere; the statement "come forth" is merely symbolical. The fifty blankets are piled outside the house and the spectators, of whom many have gathered to witness the transaction, know that that number of blankets has been given with reference to that name. In some cases the wife is rebought three, four, or even more times for one name, either repeatedly by her father, or successively by her father and other relatives, or several names may be acquired by the different repurchasings. For instance, at one potlatch not many years ago a woman obtained the names *Lälälx*, *Xwalbes*, *Smaiae-a*, and *Alkumka*. As with men, some women prefer to have one very strong name, rather than diffuse their importance over a number. In this particular case the four designations were received from different relatives. At each repurchase the call is raised:

"Come forth ..... your brother [uncle, or whatever relative it may be] relieves you from X for ....."

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but even if unaware of the fact, they realize that some supernatural, invisible visitor has arrived.

Heralds go from house to house, and sometimes to adjacent villages as well,[1] inviting the people to pay a farewell visit to the dead man who will soon leave them; in this invitation the *tsaok* name of the deceased is used. The guests assemble at once, irrespective of their rank or membership in the *tsaok* society. To mark their grief, female relatives pull out tufts of their hair, and both men and women of the immediate family cut their hair short. The body, either in its coffin or covered with blankets, is placed between the central fire and the back-room, immediately behind the place where the singers take their stations. When all are present, a son or other near relative who is also a fluent speaker, stands up and expounds how the Chief, meaning *Mutlakila*, has come to visit the dead man, and how all should try to understand the song he has brought.[2] A hidden *tsaok* has been blowing a whistle intermittently, and the singers pretend to be able to understand words of a song in its notes. In reality they have prepared in advance the new one which they now beat out, accompanied by their voices. The theme either describes the coming of the supernatural visitor, or recounts the number of potlatches given by the deceased, and the manner in which these will make smooth the path whither he is going in the same way that distributed goods validate a chief's seat in this world. This song is practised and improved upon amid the booming of the whistle as if the singers were constantly gaining new ideas and embellishments from the words of the supernatural visitor. Sometimes a few incidents are added from the *tsaok* myth. After several repetitions, a relative of the dead man asks the singers to beat out the latter's *tsaok* songs, as many of them as are remembered from the time he was first initiated into the so-

[1] The Bella Bella are said to invite foreign guests to this ceremony.

[2] Sometimes the people are present when the coming of *Mutlakila*, heralded by whistling and a thump on the roof, takes place. There are variations in this, as in all other *tsaok* rites.

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the hole in the roof, ponderously and slowly, until its talons grip the "body." In the same gradual fashion it carries this upwards until, just before the burden disappears through the roof, one of the principal singers leads his fellows and the audience in calling out: 575 766

"*Ye*··," which has the significance of, "May you have a safe passage whence you came and whither you are going."

As soon as the bird has disappeared, its notes are heard from above, growing gradually fainter as the actors blow their whistles less violently. An eloquent *nusuk* stands up and expounds how the deceased's crest has come down from above to carry away his body, and often mentions incidents in the ancestral myth to explain why this bird had appeared. A young man is sent up to replace the roof boards and the hidden accomplices rejoin the audience unostentatiously. The corpse itself remains hidden in some back corner of the house where it was concealed at the time the dummy was seized, so that nothing indicates what has taken place.

The relatives must give presents to all who have witnessed this ceremonial prerogative. These are now distributed without regard to the rank of the recipient; such gifts are not returnable and are said to be, "What Has Been Shaken Off," like dust from the departing body. A meal, likewise provided by the kinsmen of the deceased, is next served, and as the people are eating, it is customary for senior *nusuk* to make laudatory speeches, extolling the dead chief and comforting the survivors by reminding them of the way in which he will be looked after in virtue of his ancestral traditions. This procedure may continue for several hours, and it is only when no one else wishes to speak that the people disperse. [552] [537]

It is not easy to comprehend the attitude of the Bella Coola to this rite. Some influential *nusuk* state emphatically that in former days it was possible to carry it out so realistically that the uninitiated were deceived, and never suspected that the actual corpse was later on buried in secret by the singers, carpenters, and *nusuk*. On the other hand, those who do not 575 766 781

1:McDevitt E-5 (1922-1924) 1968
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grave carrying a spruce bough in his hand. He touches with it the edge where he is standing, then, in succession order, the east, south, and west margins. This circuit is repeated four times and the branch tossed away to westward. This essential ceremony is based on a belief that the lives, or perhaps the spirits, of the grave-diggers have been drawn from them into the grave and are in danger of being pressed down by the coffin. Should this occur, they would have short lives. The spruce branch enables the supernatural elements to leave the cavity and return to their owners who suffer no ill effects. Anyone, other than a grave-digger, can perform this rite.

The coffin is now lifted into the grave, care being taken that the corpse faces east. As already described, it is in a squatting position with knees almost on the ground. Boards have been prepared in advance, and with these the grave-diggers make a roof-like covering, placing at each corner a stone weighing from ten to fifteen pounds, to prevent the ghost from returning to trouble the survivors. Earth is thrown in on top of the boards, and as it falls the wailing breaks out dolorously in a final crescendo of mourning. If a child has been buried, his fellows sometimes sing a *se-da* song. At this time it is proper for one or more chiefs to rise and speak. No one is required to do so, nor is there any rule as to the order in which they make their remarks. The first speaker is usually a prominent man related to the survivors, though seldom a son, brother, or other near relative of the deceased. A speech is generally addressed in part to the spirit of the dead person, telling it where to go; in part, to the mourners. For a dead child, emphasis is laid on the fact that although he did not live long enough to be instructed into his ancestral myths on earth, this will be done for him in his future home. In conclusion, an appeal is often made to *Nusqumsiwe*, under the name of *Imaiaiaiela*, to take pains that the spirit of the dead is given its rightful place in *Nuxwalt-a*, in the section where the first forbears were created, and whither the spirits of its dead ancestors have returned since the beginning of time.

sing of time. The following speech was made by an elderly Bella Coola chief at the funeral of his great-granddaughter in June, 1910:

"Granddaughter!* Go with your grandmother* to the mountain above Tsimit where my first [previous] ancestor came to earth. Go to the mountain across the river where Raft* descended; go to the north where your ancestor found a copper house with a raven inside; go to the Skeena where another of your early ancestors found a whale; go to all the places where your forefathers experienced the incidents recorded in our myths; go and be happy.* I do not want these ever-recurring deaths in my family, but I am helpless. I hope that Sisiutlwaan will cease hunting us."

Turning to the Carrier Indians who were present, the old man continued: "Thank you for coming twice within two days to share our grief."

Turning back towards the grave, he went on:

"I have made ready the road for you.* Your grandfather* and I are grieved; our families became united when your parents married, and the bond was cemented by your birth. Now it is lost. When you were born, I rejoiced; now I am sorry. You are all right; you cannot fail because you are supported* by the names and fame of your father and mother, your grandfather and grandmother, your uncles and aunts, and your other ancestors who have passed away here to Spirit-ic. You met with them in your own village where is located your power from the experiences of your forefathers.

*The term, always very used, although the child was really a great-grandchild.
*The grandmother had been buried two days previously.
*One of the few people to reach this world.
*The places and people mentioned were all described in the myths of the dead child's ancestral family.
*In reference to goods distributed by the speaker or a representative both a few days previously when it was certain that the child would soon die.
*The child's mother's father.
*Apparently, figuratively, a road having the sense of physical support. The implication is that the deceased relatives are aiding in such a way with that the presence of their bodies is enough to prevent any one of them, including the dead child, from falling.

They will look after you and, being dead, they will be able to do so properly. You will be strong indeed. I am heavy with grief. My grandchildren alone serve to anchor me to [illegible], otherwise I would go to [illegible]. Now that you have gone,[1] my heart is light-headed and desert. No, I have other grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I will bear up and be a man, and show myself the chief that I am by right.'

During this speech the mourners remained seated on the ground, many of the women wailing at intervals and the men listening with more or less attention except those who were filling in the grave. Once or twice the speaker hesitated for a suitable word and suggestions were called out to him.

As the old man finished speaking and sat down, another chief arose.[2]

'Children,' he said, addressing the parents of the dead child, 'You have indeed suffered misfortune. A few days ago, your mother[3] died; today, your daughter. Perhaps it is all for the best. Remember how many ancestors who have gone before will be waiting to receive the child; she will be well cared for. Death comes to one, chief or commoner, but do not despair even at this double misfortune. Your mother[4] never did an evil action to anyone, never said a harsh word to anyone, try to imitate her. See! I have neither father nor mother. They are both dead; we all go the same way.'

In conclusion he urged the step-father of the grieving father, husband of the woman who had died a few days previously, to bear up.

As the second speaker finished, a third arose and spoke briefly.

'I am sorry,' he said, 'for [illegible][5] in his grief today. We have

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[1] The home of the speaker's maternal family.

[2] The arrangement had been made in advance concerning the double grief of the host in which each should address the mourners.

[3] The mother of the child's father had died a few days previously.

[4] Referring to the mother of the child's father.

[5] The dead child's mother's father, he was addressed by his maternal name as the speaker

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

U.Mn/Goveth E-9 (1922-1924)1948
MBA Bellacosta MEA

prerogatives connected with the ceremony. The actual recounting of the myths may be done by a fluent speaker on behalf of the bereaved man, and when he has finished speaking it is proper for several of his peers to make complimentary speeches, leading the future donor for his interjections. Food is then served and the gathering breaks up.

The preliminaries of a memorial potlatch do not differ from those of a ordinary one. There is the same counting and recounting of goods, the same giving and receiving of presents, the contending and borrowing. When at last the donor is ready, he invites call his fellow-villagers to his house for commencement of the arrangements and allotment of the work. As at a potlatch, food is provided on a lavish scale, and there is the one sham-fight with a borrowing-race ending in the destruction of part of the house. Then the carpenters receive their instructions; some to make different sections of the new structure; some to paint ancestral designs on the front and back walls, and some to make the various objects required.

The one difference between a memorial and an ordinary potlatch appears at this allotment of work. Instead of a committee to record the glories of the donor's ancestry,* carpenters are requested to make memorial-posts for the dead relative for is being commemorated. These are erected in the cemetery near the grave and are of three kinds, although it is unusual for all three to be set up for a single chief.

The last consists of a wooden post carved with the design of one crest of the deceased's crests (see Plates 19 and 20). These figure are usually representations of the bird or animal chosen and by his first ancestors; it is customary to portray the one went through the father on the right, that wound through to another on the left. Instead of a chief, the figure may portray the past down which ancestral his first ancestor to the beginning of time, or Mount *Waxaid* in human form, wearing a head-ring but as he did before he turned to

* Also a consideration of a new house and the painting of new designs is often undertaken

[illegible]

Such an adoption occurs only when the deceased was the owner of a Bella Bella myth and the song in question had been used to ensure a real or fictitious relative. It is contrary to custom to use the tune or words of a song not composed for a member of the deceased's ancestral family.

The actual delivering of invitations by the owners to the desired guests does not differ from the manner already described, except that they are asked "to come to visit the sick [dead]." The significance is, of course, that the mourner's condition is that of a patient. To indicate the reason of their visit, guests at a memorial potlatch always wear a little dyed cedar-bark around their heads.

On arrival, the first party of foreign guests is conducted to the donor's house, where they make themselves comfortable in the section allotted to them by the hereditary Bella Coola chief who is a famous orator has been asked by the donor to speak, and he rises to do so as soon as his fellow-villagers have entered and taken their places. No set phrases are used, but the speaker usually begins by reminding all present of the way in which their ancestors were created in Nuxalk-a, and how all must return thither. It is an occasion on which eloquence is essential, and the speaker delights in using as many archaic words and rhetorical expressions as possible, with constant reference to religious beliefs and ancient history as recorded in mythology. Then he speaks of the death which is the occasion of the ceremony. If the deceased were an old man, he is referred to by a special term not in common usage, *nuhal-ás*, which implies wisdom and respect as well as extreme age. The orator states that he has fallen, using the term *ḳayás*, normally applied to the thunderous crash of some mighty tree. He speaks of a young chief as *xwᵊlitsáxᵘ*, short-lived, a person who has been burned down by the supernatural Carpenters. He continues by describing the works of the deceased, the number of potlatches he gave and the manner in which his name was known to many tribes. Finally he tells of the donor's grief, and of how this "sickness" has been alle-

LSE Gerrish E-1 (1922-1924) 1948
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viced by the presence of welcome guests. Mention is frequently made of the journey taken by the dead man to the centre of his ancestral myths. In addition to being an orator, the speaker must also be a *numtē chief*, since it is felt that none other can have the necessary assurance and poise to refer to these most sacred and important subjects. During the speech, eagle-down blew eagle down over the heads of all present.

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Food has been prepared in advance, and as soon as the speaker has finished, the hostess call the guests to partake of it. The first course is then distributed, cooked salmon mixed with olachen grease. Speeches are sometimes delivered during this part of the meal, as well as at the second course, oolichan with more olachen grease. If the guests have arrived during the afternoon, there is no delay between the feast and the ritual that follows, but if they have come during the morning, there is a gap until the evening. Visitors usually time their arrival for the early part of the afternoon.

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The next event is a speech from one of the foreign chiefs, phrased in grandiloquent terms similar to those used by the Bella Coola orator. He speaks of the manner in which the supernatural Carpenters have burned the deceased, but reminds his hearers that this is because *Alpoonlie* has decreed it, therefore all must be for the best. He refers to the dead man's crest, and to the manner in which this gains will be available to him. During the day, the singers have been careful to learn the tune of a mourning song used by the ancestral family of each foreign chief likely to speak. This they now hear sung, often assisted by some of the guests, and always accompanied by their singing. No one dances to accompany the song; it is merely a verbal mark of sympathy, implying that the speaker himself knows the grief occasioned by death, and, also, that he too is sufficiently important to be able to use a mourning song. If, as is usually the case, there is more than one influential chief in the party, a second rises to speak, repeating in different terms the sentiments expressed by his predecessor. Another

mourning song is sung for him in the same way. Sometimes as many as five or six speeches are made, each followed by a song of the same type. In such circumstances it is impossible for the Bella Coola musicians to learn all the texts, but if five or six chiefs are present, it implies the presence of a large delegation among whom are always a number of singers. It is they who really lose out the texts, assisted by their Bella Coola confrères. When the last song has been sung, the guests present their hosts with gifts brought for the purpose. The donor himself receives the most valuable, but all the Bella Coola are remembered, chiefs to a greater extent than commoners. Such gifts are not to be returned; in fact, to do so specifically, especially soon after the receipt, would be insulting. After the distribution the evening concludes with the usual meal.

This ritual is repeated on the arrival of every group of guests. It is uncertain whether or not all the mourning songs are again learnt out after the song of the final speaker of the last group. This seems to have been done occasionally, and the distribution of presents by the guests likewise postponed. Just before the gathering breaks up, the hamatsa call out: "*Hamatsamenuqs.*"

This serves as intimation that the Bella Coola rites will take place the following morning, and the guests prepare accordingly. Occasionally, when a man is poor, a memorial potlatch is held without the presence of foreign guests.* In such cases the preliminaries just described are, of course, omitted and the above call marks the commencement of the ceremony.

The next day the guests gather in the donor's house, clad in their best. The mourners are in attendance, each conspicuous with the proper mark. In many cases several of them carry miniature totem-poles, carved to represent bird or animal deities assumed by the donor's ancestors, and which

*This was probably quite common during the period when all potlatch feasts were secular.

G-96 Dorsett, S. 1 (1922-1924)1948
NES Deliberate NES

He did not also the necessity disobeying her "to make good the path" of her children. For this purpose they decided to give a copper and a can of money; it was impossible to learn the exact amount. Joe told Captain Schooner of their intention.

Hence soon the body was brought in a canoe from the cemetery to its closed coffin and died ashore at a convenient spot near the cemetery. Those running the canoe were young men who happened to be at the cemetery, irrespective of whether or not they were related to Josie. The coffin was laid on a grassy place and Captain Schooner seated himself beside it. People were passing and repassing, some sat down for a time, then moved off to dinner. Occasionally, a woman would sit and wail, the most common being Reuben's married daughter; Captain Schooner moved around walking to his friends amidst the mute wailing. About 1:30 P.M. everyone in the village had assembled, including a number of Carrier Indians, anxious to see the sight. Captain Schooner withdrew to his house after asking Bobby Bobby to summon the chiefs to meet him there. The messenger, who then several herald, went around the gathering whispering to each. Invitation to those notified at the cemetery the preceding evening he called all the older and most influential Babine Chiefs, Albert King, Samuel King, Joe Williams, Joshua Woods, Abe Lewis, Lame Charlie, Judas, and Nicholaiheemaw. Captain Schooner requested the last named, an important chief, to the charge of the ceremony. To this time Samuel King told Nicholaiheemaw, who informed the others, what had been arranged for his daughter and they agreed that it was good. It was widely rumored that George Wilson would be delighted, privately he had been on friendly terms with the girl for some time. Joe Williams also told Nicholaiheemaw the two Indian propositions that he intended to carry out, the return of the money to Captain Schooner, and the whipping of his daughter. Nicholaiheemaw informed the people concerned. At this meeting it was decided that various chiefs should speak after the Christian service at the grave.

Smithsonian R-9 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bellacoola MSS

was not carefully observed. Those wishing to dig took turns with the tools; there was no supervision, and no orders given. When the grave was ready, Jim Pollard asked Judas to perform the rite with the spruce bough, which he did with a branch brought by one of the youths. The young men lowered the coffin into the grave while the band continued to play. The missionary then read the Christian burial service, after which he withdrew. Some of the young men brought planks from old houses near-by, sawed them to the size of the grave and laid them over the coffin as a cover. At this juncture Judas, one of the oldest and most conservative of the Bella Coola, rose to speak. First he offered consolation to the mourning relatives by pointing out that all must travel the same road. Then he spoke to Jessie, telling her not to linger, but to travel back the path of her ancestors from generation to generation until she reached the place where they first came down from above, and dance to ascend to *Nuxwit'a*. It was impossible to obtain a literal translation of the speech, which was punctuated by calls of "Ts-" from the male Bella Coola. The next speaker was Jim Pollard, the most influential Kimsquit and a personal friend, though not a relative, of Captain Schooner's.

"Go," he said to the dead woman, "Go to the localities from which came your first forefathers in the beginning of time. There you will find your most valuable ancestral possessions. Go at once, do not linger and lose yourself on the road from generation to generation."

Turning to George Nelson, he went on, "Do not be downhearted, all of us must travel the same road. It was made by no man, it is the work of *Alquntam*."

Looking back once more to the grave, he said, "In *Kimsquit* we buried many illustrious relatives of yours. You will be among friends, whereas we are left to lament your departure."

It was impossible to write down the words at the time and the above record is not literally correct, although it represents the gist of the speech.

Captain Schooner whispered to Robert Hood, another of the

for the Carriers and other foreigners. The cook began to ladle the rice into basins provided by Captain Schooner; these were taken by some of the younger men who poured helpings into the dishes of the guests. Spoons had been forgotten, and there was delay until these were provided by slivers split from a block of wood for the purpose. Contrary to ancient usage, no attempt was made to serve food to the guests in order of their rank. Men, women, and children were sitting everywhere, the infants kept moving around and crying continually throughout the performance, but no one seemed to be disturbed thereby.

When everyone had eaten, Nebuchadnezzar, who had been sitting facing the other singers, beat on the floor to arrest attention and then rose to speak. He asked the help of all to make the ceremony a success, and then message the grief of the bereaved relatives.

Jim Williams and his daughter had taken their places on the right-hand side of the hall and had requested Willie Black, a fluent speaker and influential chief, to assist them in arranging the financial transactions. They spread a blanket on the floor on which the bills were counted, and beside this Willie knelt. Jim gave him a sum of money, which was counted and re-counted; Willie then held it up in the rain hope that it could be seen by everyone in the hall. He announced the amount, also that it was to relieve (the divorced) Mrs. George Nelson from her late husband, and that it would "make clean the place where she sat." A young man delivered the money to George who added it to the general stock for later distribution. Then a copper was produced, held up, and presented to him for the same purpose. Meanwhile Jim, assisted by his mother and other relatives, had been counting the money which they proposed to give to Captain Schooner in settlement of the previously contracted debt. One hundred and fifty dollars were produced and handed to Willie Black, who held them up and announced that it was in return for the [illegible] given by Captain Schooner on a previous occasion to Jim Williams, his wife, his son, his daughter, his mother, and his stepfather. The bills

were taken by one of the younger men to Captain Schooner, who accepted them without showing either gratitude or the reverse; this errand was a matter that concerned the Williams family, not the Schooners. After a short delay, Billy Pollard moved over to the group and spoke to Joe and Willie Wacht, to whom he gave $10. The latter stated that this sum, which he held up, and a horse, which was not produced, were being given to George Nelson to relay his (divorced) wife. Billy is not related to the women, but had long been friendly and wished to show in making good the path for his children. This matter had not been previously broached. The choice of Willie Wacht as announcer was made merely because he was a fluent speaker and, as a child, had the necessary self-confidence to act fittingly.

After these preliminaries, the main rite was begun. Joe Pollard, an eloquent chief unrelated to any of the principals, spoke at some length describing the journey taken by Jessie to visit the graves of her ancestral myths. He was followed by a Bella Bella chief who happened to be in Bella Coola at the time. In the Chinook jargon he first expressed his sympathy and support for Captain Schooner because he was carrying out the living rites, then asked leave to speak in Bella Bella because he found it difficult to express himself in Chinook. He described the journey which the deceased had taken owing to her membership in the ancestral family of her mother, a Bella Bella woman. He too paid much attention to the ejaculations; in fact, it was impossible on the basis of the hall to hear what was said owing to the clattering and crying of children.

After considerable delay, the singers decided it was time to sing the first mourning song. It had never before been used, although the composer, Billy Pollard, had prepared it several years earlier and had merely altered the words during the morning after consulting Captain Schooner about his ancestral myths. The singers had learnt text and tune during the rehearsal a few hours before. It was impossible to record it in detail; in outline, it consisted of the words

and dividing him as divide it. Harry Schooner is neither dominant nor capable, and finds acted only as clerk, as the actual decision rested with Captain Schooner, Reuben, and George. Daniel Nelson would normally have played a prominent part, but he was absent owing to the illness of his infant daughter. Samuel King joined the group, bringing with him two coppers, two rifles, and a sum of money, and whispered the purpose of the consultation.

After the usual pause, George Nelson and Captain Schooner, the latter substituting for the absent Dan Nelson, stood up and walked around the hall carrying three coppers and two rifles. Then they returned to their places.

Nidechaikeenee had been asked by Captain Schooner to act as announcer on account of his good voice and self-confidence. He joined the group in the corner to call out whatever they whispered to him. First he stated that one of the coppers just displayed had been given to George Nelson to relay from him to his wife, Jim Williams' daughter. He explained that the other two, as well as the rifles, were presents from Samuel King, received by his brother, Nelson, and his sister, Mrs. Alexander Claiborne, in George Nelson's consequence of the latter's marriage to Samuel King's daughter. The arrangement having been witnessed by the relatives of the girl, it was fitting that they should give the first presents.

Captain Schooner had first planned to expend [illegible] to celebrate the return of his dead daughter. He with gave him [illegible] for the purpose, and when Jim Williams returned [illegible], he decided to use only [illegible] of his savings, making [illegible] in all. To this Reuben added $80, Harry $40, and Dan Nelson $40, increasing the total to $270. George ascertained what he had received from Jim Williams for the repurchase of the latter's daughter, as well as what Samuel King had just given him. Samuel added to the pile some money belonging to Jessie.*

*The writer could not learn why the names had not been announced with the other presentations. The reason may have been the fact that there were two, though a payment was made for the goods of a dead person only to the husband and to [illegible] as a courtesy, but [illegible] to [illegible].

[The Dance of Life]

*[illegible] *146 season. The night's ceremony concludes with a meal and the admonitions of the mandaks.

No further description is needed of things taking place the next day, that of marriages, when a ritual song is composed, again dealing with S's powers, enticed for masks is set. The evening's ceremonial does not in so long as that of Assistance.

[illegible] The next day, gather, the supporters ask at the masks, some of which must be finished by night. Late in the evening both Initiates and uninitiated prepare themselves by painting and washing, as this time the song men provide pots of water across the their female friend. As already described, the Initiates are the first to serve followed by the uninitiated when all is ready. In Kimsquitsa are the masks of at least some of S's supernatural power suspended by cords of cedar-bark from a sloping pole that stretches from the floor at the base of the back across the cross-beam behind the fire. It is said, although the informant could not guarantee the truth of the statement, that long ago masks had to be displayed on this dance, though it unnatural at others. It is a serious and sacred time, one at which frivolity is quite out of place, and the mandaks are in readiness to punish any offenders. One very old informant told of long ago a mandak strike down and kill a doctor from another house for holding intercourse with a woman on this night. The heralds may enter the door, reporting and interpreting the remarks of the mandaks, the Enemy of these functionaries always adds appreciably to the success of any Bella Coola rite. On this occasion S and the dancer of Nuhlayum sat perform, followed by those who have danced in former years, according to the desire of the singers, first in the room, when many Initiates have performed, the rite may continue almost till dawn, for all must dance. After the departure of the uninitiated the Initiates are blessed, while a cerebral addresses them, concerning on the ritual and, perhaps, asking a min

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[The Women Curing Dance]

supposed to have taught them, he appears, supported by two *kakaciat*, and attempts to dance, but is too feeble to do more than be assisted around the fire, feebly shaking his hands. He retires, but comes forth once more as the singers beat out the song of regular *kaciat* type composed for him and which his fellows have practised. If two have been composed, he appears a third time. After X has finally withdrawn, the usual procedure is the usual manner, by the dancing of every *kaciat* who has had a call in time to his two songs. It is late before all have danced; then the uninitiated are given a little food and sent away. The *kakaciat* eat more leisurely, and listen to the admonitions of the marshals. On account of the solemnity of the occasion, their words of wisdom are even more grandiloquent than usual. The following may be regarded as a typical address:

"You have done well, ye *kakaciat*, in thus carrying out the ceremony so admirably. I thank you. You have done well X, you have done as our fathers did. None of you must ever forget the precepts and example of our fathers who have handed down this rite from dim antiquity. Perhaps when we marshals are dead some of you will become careless and want to alter the ceremonial. Do not dream of anything so foolish. The proper method is that which you have just seen. Try to attain."

When the marshals have finished, X dances once again, and the weary *kakaciat* at length disperse.

The next day, or rather later in the same day, for it is long after midnight before the ceremony is completed, is unknown. Many of the *kakaciat* assemble in X's house about four o'clock in the afternoon to try on the masks and attend to the innumerable details. A representation of *Awi'ltsanâkwe* is always prepared, as well as those of *Hâpaoton*, *Ianowâkwe*, and *Sewekûk*. The last-named is the "Wise One," "He of Whom Questions are Asked," the supernatural being who decides points of ritual in the dances in the land above. No paint is used on his mask, but a coloured effect is obtained by means